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Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2924 B (XXVII) of 24 November 1972, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it annually a report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and, in its resolution 44/184 of 19 December 1989, it specified that such reports should include the recommendations of the Unit and any decisions of the Assembly and other governing bodies. In its decision 50/470 of 23 December 1995 on the biennial programme of work for the Fifth Committee, the Assembly included the item on the Unit in its programme for 1997. The present report is submitted in accordance with the above decisions, and includes detailed information on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in eight reports of JIU. To reduce the volume of the present document, relevant JIU recommendations are rendered in a succinct form.

II. Reorganization of the Department of Public Information

2. A report on the reorganization of the Department of Public Information and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon were submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session (A/44/433 and Add.1). In its resolution 44/50 of 8 December 1989, the Assembly took note of the report and of the comments of the Secretary-General thereon.

3. The structure that JIU recommendations referred to has not existed for several years. It was because the reorganization dealt with by the JIU report did not function as conceived that the Department was subsequently reorganized. The JIU recommendations, except for recommendation II which dealt with the Joint United Nations Information Committee, are therefore not relevant to the Department as it exists today. The Secretary-General's comments on recommendation II were provided in paragraphs 7 to 12 of document A/44/433/Add.1.

> **Recommendation II.** *Autonomous status should again be given to the secretariat of the Joint United Nations Information Committee*

4. In 1989, the Administrative Committee on Coordination adopted decision 1989/30 on enhancing the public image of the United Nations system. It contained the revised terms of reference of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, which revitalized its role as the essential instrument of inter-agency coordination and cooperation in the field of public information. In 1993, the Administrative Committee on Coordination undertook a review of a number of its subsidiary bodies, including the Joint United Nations Information Committee, and decided to maintain it as an Administrative Committee on Coordination subsidiary body responsible for coordination in the area of public information.

5. Subsequently, the Joint United Nations Information Committee has focused its system-wide coordination of joint information activities on: participation in international expositions and activities/programmes in support of system-wide events ranging from international conferences to "days", "years" and "decades" adopted by the United Nations governing bodies; organization of audio-visual productions, preparation of joint catalogues, establishment of common storage and retrieval systems in the audio-visual field; joint programmes for non-governmental organizations through the Non-Governmental Liaison Service; use of computer and communications technology in public information; and cooperation with United Nations information centres. In addition to its annual sessions, the Joint United Nations Information Committee conducts ad hoc sessions on specific issues, such as development and implementation of system-wide information strategies leading to the major international conferences.

6. Since 1996, the Joint United Nations Information Committee has restructured its work to dedicate a greater part of its sessions to an in-depth discussion of ways and means of promoting better public understanding of the role and achievements of the United Nations. The Committee also decided to establish an open-ended working group of New York-based representatives of member organizations to meet periodically between sessions to discuss progress in the implementation of ongoing projects and any other matters of mutual concern.

III. An optical disk system for the United Nations

7. A report on an optical disk system for the United Nations and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon were submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session (A/44/684 and Add.1). The comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination were provided in document A/46/88 and Corr.1. In section XVI of its resolution 44/201 B of 21 December 1989, the Assembly took note of the report as well as of the comments of the Secretary-General thereon and requested the Secretary-General to implement the optical disk project.

Recommendation 1. *A fully operational optical disk system should be installed in the United Nations Secretariat.*

8. The United Nations Optical Disk System (ODS) for the electronic storage and retrieval of official documents and publications has been fully operational since 1993 in Geneva and New York. All parliamentary documentation and official records produced in Geneva and New York are available on the same day as they are issued in paper form. The number of documents on ODS has reached over 300,000 in all official languages and the number of users has grown to 2,000 with over 4,000 retrievals per day. The United Nations Office at Vienna and the regional commissions are currently in the process of being given access to the system.

9. Connection to the Internet has broadened the range of users of the system beyond the Secretariat and the permanent missions. Governments and academic institutions, United Nations depository libraries, non-governmental organizations, the media and the general public worldwide are all potential users. Many of them are willing to pay a usage or subscription fee as they do today when ordering documents through the Sales Catalogue of the United Nations. The ODS database of documents will also be available on CD-ROM as a sales item of the United Nations in all six official languages. The first CD-ROMs are expected to be produced in 1997.

Recommendation 2. *Should the United Nations Secretariat in-house resources prove insufficient, it should consider contracting out the inputting on optical disks of United Nations documentation.*

10. The Secretary-General took the recommendation into account in preparing budget proposals. In an effort to provide retroactive coverage of documents, funds amounting to over $100,000 were appropriated for outsourcing the scanning and basic indexing of all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations main bodies until 1992. Outside contractors completed the project in 1995 at expenditure of about $110,000, with additional internal indexing support by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.This collection of historic documents is now available through the United Nations web site to those Member States that have requested access to the optical disk system. Enlarging such a collection beyond the obvious choice of the resolutions and decisions of the main organs of the Organization would require considerable research — and perhaps guidance from Member States — to determine which documents can be considered "important". Considering the magnitude and importance of such a project, and mindful of the resource limitations under the regular budget, the idea of establishing a trust fund of voluntary contributions for this specific purpose might offer a solution.

Recommendation 3. *The legislative bodies of the United Nations system may wish to consider installing optical disk systems of their own, using the results of the United Nations Office at Geneva pilot project and ensuring the most cost-effective and compatible configuration.*

11. Worldwide access to ODS via the Internet has spawned renewed interest in it throughout the United Nations system. Instead of establishing their own individual systems, the agencies could consider utilizing an upgraded common United Nations system-wide ODS located in New York and Geneva as the present system is.

IV. Technical cooperation and the use of national professional project personnel

12. The JIU report on technical cooperation and the use of national professional project personnel and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon were submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/186 and Add.1). In its decision 46/466 of 20 December 1991, the Assembly took note of the report and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon.

Recommendation 1. *The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should establish a system of statistical data on national professional project personnel, incorporating inputs from the field, specifying sources of finance, types of contract and its duration.*

Recommendation 2. *The report on the operational activities of the United Nations system should recommend an efficient national professional project personnel policy.*

Recommendation 3. *In recipient countries, the United Nations system should: (a) devote technical cooperation funds to the transfer of needed expertise through the use of international experts whenever such expertise is lacking in the country; (b) mobilize more local human resources and increase government execution and subcontracting to national institutions, without any change in the status of national experts; and (c) mobilize more experts from developing countries as international experts employed in their*

own region and in the framework of technical cooperation among developing countries, rather than using every expert in his own country as a national professional project personnel.

Recommendation 4. *The United Nations system should work out country programmes based on a better definition of development objectives closely integrated with technical cooperation projects in line with aims pursued by the Government.*

13. Changes in the area of technical cooperation since 1991 include emphasis on national execution of projects, the enhanced role of the Resident Coordinator system, preparation of the country strategy notes, introduction of successor programming arrangements for UNDP and the resulting changes in the operating relations between UNDP and the executing or implementing specialized agencies, etc. In its resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995, the General Assembly addressed the concerns of the report by calling for the standardization of guidelines dealing with the recruitment, administration and remuneration of national project personnel. At present, such guidelines are being developed by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. The relevant guidelines of some United Nations programmes and funds follow the procedures contained in the UNDP programme and projects manual.

14. The importance of the national professional project personnel as the major source of expertise for technical cooperation projects has increased steadily in recent years because of their crucial advantages in transferring national private sector expertise to public institutions, using national talent that could be lost through the brain-drain and cultural compatibility with national work environment. International experts are hired by Governments whenever the national expertise in a given area is lacking. The agencies do their best to ensure that the salaries of experts are in line with best prevailing local conditions for professional staff, as recommended by the Inspector.

15. The rich positive experience of the United Nations system in the use of national professional project personnel shows that such use contributes to capacity-building, leads to improved local awareness of development issues and underlines the concept of national ownership of the projects. For example, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) uses the concept of multi-annual technical assistance, where at least half of the consultancy work is entrusted to specialists from developing countries. Its national/regional training centres in developing countries are delivering individual training programmes, along with regional courses provided by UPU in its national/regional multi-year integrated projects. With the assistance of UPU, a technical cooperation among developing countries workshop on postal reform has been organized in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region and another is planned for Africa. In 1994, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) introduced innovative schemes to technical cooperation among developing countries exchanges and a parallel initiative for technical cooperation among countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe, which provided a structured and cost-effective framework to tap the resources and skills of individuals and institutions of member countries. Through the use of the complementary capacities of countries, new partnership agreements have contributed to the promotion of national and collective self-reliance. By the end of 1996, 94 developing countries and 10 countries in transition had signed agreements for technical cooperation among developing countries and technical cooperation among countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe and provided the details on over 4,500 experts, whose services are offered under those arrangements. FAO maintains a computerized roster to facilitate easy access and identification of suitable experts against specific needs. More than 500 technical cooperation among developing countries/technical cooperation among countries in transition assignments have been completed under the FAO regular and field programmes.

16. Concerning regional projects, the implementation responsibilities are shared, as much as feasible, by the participating countries and involve extensive use of regional experts. The United Nations Secretariat envisages establishing a steering committee, composed of the representatives of participatory countries, UNDP and other donors and national coordinators, for the purpose of planning, guiding and monitoring regional project activities to coincide with the project tripartite reviews.

17. The organizations with mostly regional/subregional technical cooperation programmes also utilize national professional project personnel to the greatest extent feasible, particularly in the national level activities under a subregional or regional project. Professional individuals or institutions within a country carry out research, replicate projects or conduct training. For example, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in backstopping a number of regional projects (such as trans-European railways and motorways, energy efficiency, population, statistics, etc.), is using national professional project personnel under innovative schemes, which include the secondment of experts remunerated by Governments over a period of two to four years, national coordinators responsible for studies and negotiations, as well as national experts acting as

consultants. ECE also provides support to the environmental centres in Budapest and Warsaw, which use local professionals.

18. With regard to an information system on national professional project personnel, organizations and agencies regularly collect relevant data for internal management purposes and forward it to UNDP or any other interested agency.

19. It is an established practice in the United Nations development activities that, under technical support services arrangements, the first level of expertise to be used in technical backstopping is national consultants, but when national expertise is not available, special country support teams consisting of international advisers provide technical backstopping to programmes and projects aimed at enhancing national self-reliance. On the issue of salary supplements, the Joint Consultative Group on Policy has agreed on a joint policy on payments to government staff.

20. It should be noted that organizations and agencies provide assistance to Governments exclusively at their request. During the project formulation, the role and responsibilities of the National Director are clearly defined in order to ensure ownership of and commitment to programme objectives. The development agencies are active participants in the country strategy note process where undertaken by the Government, as well as in the initiative of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy on common country assessment, which strengthen the linkages between national development objectives and technical cooperation activities within the programme approach. It should be also stressed that the Administrative Committee on Coordination maintains its view on the matter as reflected in its 1991 comments on the JIU report, namely that it is the Governments' responsibility to define their development objectives. Overall, the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination are in the process of analysing the full impact of the national professional project personnel modality on their programme delivery.

V. Towards an integrated library network of the United Nations system

21. The JIU report on an integrated library network of the United Nations system was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session (A/47/669). The comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination are contained in documents A/48/83 and Add.1, respectively. The Assembly did not take any action on the report.

> **Recommendation 1.** *Effective linkages between all components of existing or potential networks should be established with special emphasis on hardware and software compatibility.*

22. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library is currently implementing an integrated library management system that uses international standards (e.g., USMARC, Z39/50) recommended by the Task Force on Inter-Library Cooperation, Standards and Management at the Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC). The Dag Hammarskjöld Library supplies indexing data from the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) to the ODS on a daily basis. It is envisaged that direct links will be established between UNBIS and ODS in a new integrated library management system and then to other electronic services as well. Use of the Internet for the exchange of information has removed some of the hardware and software constraints of the various networks and has opened up networking possibilities. The Library supplies data, on a quarterly basis, to the worldwide Research Libraries Information Network. UNBIS Plus on CD-ROM is beginning its third year of publication, and it was made available free to 58 United Nations libraries and reference services worldwide. The Library has also received the CD-ROM of databases of other United Nations system agencies.

> **Recommendation 2.** *The relationships among different parts of network of internal libraries and documentation centres should be clearly specified.*

23. Priority was given to linking the Secretariat's reference collections with UNBIS and to other electronic information resources on the local area network. Efforts to network databases of inter-departmental interest are in progress. Collection development policies were formulated to ensure coordination between materials in reference libraries and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

> **Recommendation 3.** *Expertise in database management should be made available within the documentation centres of the Organization.*

24. Once the integrated library management system is fully operational, participating libraries will be able to use its client software directly from their own locations to input data to the UNBIS server. The conversion of UNBIS data from the common communication format to the USMARC format will ease the expansion of a shared indexing programme and facilitate the participation of the Dag

Hammarskjöld Library in the United Nations Cooperative Cataloguing System. Towards that end, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva undertook indexing of additional series of United Nations documents. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library provides to others data and programs for printed and CD-ROM products of the Library at Geneva. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library assists the departments of the Secretariat involved in creating and posting their own databases on the Internet/Intranet and acts as facilitator in the creation of local databases for reference collections, ensuring the compatibility of applications and providing training.

Recommendation 4. *To improve coordination among libraries and to utilize better existing mechanisms of inter-library cooperation.*

25. To achieve the coordinated, cooperative and more widely available access to United Nations system information resources, the Dag Hammarskjöld has focused on the following areas. In indexing and bibliographic control, the Library strengthened its authority control capability. Development of the UNBIS thesaurus will go in the direction of a macro thesaurus with specialized subsections for the indexing needs of every participating library. Technical procedures for the integration of the ESCAP Bibliographic Information System (EBIS) Thesaurus into the UNBIS thesaurus are being developed. The UNBIS name authority file will be expanded to provide full authority control over the data provided by all participating libraries. Concerning the application of international standards, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has converted its bibliographic data from the common communication format of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) to the USMARC format along with streamlining its databases. In regard to CD-ROM production and distribution, UNBIS Plus on CD-ROM was produced with a commercial vendor under an arrangement whereby initial development costs were underwritten by the vendor and later repaid from profits.

26. Concerning the utilization of commercial and non-commercial hosts, the Library's own home page on the United Nations Web site provides bibliographies and data on the United Nations, previously available either only in print or only to library staff. A searchable database, United Nations Info Quest (UN-I-QUE), allows quick access to document symbols for the information. Remote, desk-top access to significant CD-ROM databases was provided to all staff working with the electronic desktop services and products of multi-departmental interest are made available via the CD-server. Complete collection of the Economist Intelligence Unit's country reports is now available via the Intranet. Electronic mail software allowed for the expansion of the Electronic Dissemination of International News program, which transmits daily over 3,000 documents to permanent mission and Secretariat staff, including most of the Secretariat's overseas offices. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library uses the non-commercial host Research Libraries Information Network for dissemination of bibliographic data to a worldwide user audience. The Library's training programme has greatly intensified. CyberSeek, a basic Internet training course, was expanded to all staff of the United Nations system and public access workstations for Internet were installed. The Library conducts electronic news-gathering workshops and offers ongoing training in indexing, ODS, CD-ROMs and database applications.

Recommendation 5. *To create a permanent inter-library panel.*

27. The Task Force on Inter-Library Cooperation, Standards and Management, with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library as an active participant, performs the function of an inter-library panel.

Recommendation 6. *To enhance professional training of librarians.*

28. New training initiatives include briefings and a workshop in the management and use of United Nations documentation and information resources for staff of the United Nations information centres. An extensive programme is planned on indexing policies and UNBIS training to ensure uniformity in the shared bibliographic data. The training programme to enhance the professional skills of the staff of the of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library includes such areas as indexing techniques, USMARC and Comparative Online.

VI. Management of buildings in the United Nations system

29. The JIU report on the management of buildings in the United Nations system was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session (see A/49/560). The comments of the Secretary-General thereon were provided in document A/50/753. The Assembly did not take any action on the report.

Recommendation 1. *To assure regular funding of building maintenance sufficient for timely repairs and replacements along with effective monitoring and inspection.*

30. The Secretariat has undertaken preventive maintenance and established controls and inspection systems, but their extent continues to be limited by the budgetary constraints, building emergencies and major maintenance activities. With limited budgetary resources, preventive maintenance projects have to be postponed when routine maintenance and unforseen emergencies surface. As to the recommended establishment of a building fund supported by fixed annual contribution, it could not be carried out owing to the continued budgetary constraints of the Organization.

> **Recommendation 2.** *Building managers should participate in the designing and remodelling of buildings.*

31. Until April 1996, the Overseas Property Management and Construction Unit of the Buildings Management Service was entrusted with the overall coordination of building construction and design for United Nations premises worldwide. Since May 1996, however, owing to financial constraints, the Unit has ceased to undertake new projects. In the proposed 1998-1999 budget, the functions of the Unit are abolished. Consequently, Buildings Management Service will no longer perform the global coordination functions, but will limit those services to Headquarters.

> **Recommendation 3.** *Building managers should periodically review the balance between the use of in-house staff and outside contractors for performing building services from the viewpoints of performance, reliability and cost-effectiveness.*

32. Various maintenance functions have been consolidated at Headquarters into a new category of trades and crafts personnel, which has resulted in greater flexibility and enhanced performance of in-house staff. Selective maintenance tasks, not economically provided by in-house staff, were fully or partially contracted out, while maintaining a core level of in-house staff for expediency and cost-effectiveness. These contracts are continuously monitored and supervised. Outsourcing will be reviewed pending recommendations of an audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on it.

> **Recommendation 4.** *The Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should schedule meetings on important building management questions.*

33. Although, with the elimination of the Overseas Property Management and Construction Unit of the Buildings Management Service in 1998, the responsibility for the management of buildings will be decentralized, liaison between building managers worldwide will be maintained as necessary.

VII. Working with non-governmental organizations: operational activities for development of the United Nations system with non-governmental organizations and Governments at the grass-roots and national levels

34. The JIU report on working with non-governmental organizations: operational activities for development of the non-governmental organizations and Governments at the grass-roots and national levels and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon were submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session (A/49/122 and Add. 1). In its decision 49/441 of 19 December 1994, the Assembly took note of the JIU report and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon.

> **Recommendation 1:** *To enhance multilateral operational collaboration, the following is essential: (a) participative programming actively involving non-governmental organizations along with decentralization allowing field representatives to work effectively with the organizations; (b) guidelines to field representatives on collaboration with non-governmental organizations and on facilitating joint government/organization efforts; and (c) advice on how effectively to encourage collaboration between Southern and Northern non-governmental organizations.*

35. Members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination attach high priority to strengthening a mechanism for participative country-level programming. For example, non-governmental organizations have become formal partners in about 100 national plans of action of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and participate in country programme mid-term reviews. At UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), non-governmental organizations increasingly take part not only in project formulation, but also in monitoring and evaluation. Non-governmental organization partners of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) provide inputs into its proposed work programme for 1998-1999. The

implementation by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) of the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development is fully in line with this JIU recommendation.

36. Comprehensive guidelines for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the programme cycle are being developed by UNICEF; provisional guidelines covering emergency situations were issued in 1994. UNFPA is revising its guidelines, whereas UNESCO has adopted directives on relations with non-governmental organizations. The World Food Programme (WFP) has established relevant guidelines, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has developed a questionnaire to assist its country directors in the identification of non-governmental organization partners. Concrete steps were taken to facilitate the government-non-governmental organization dialogue. For example, UNICEF's 1996 mission statement and the Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasized such cooperation. The World Health Organization (WHO) has successfully brokered government/non-governmental organization exchanges. ECE is working on a draft convention on public participation in environmental decision-making, which will facilitate joint government/ non-governmental organization efforts. Decentralized procedures on project implementation are being established by UNDP, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), WFP and UNFPA, whose representatives have been given greater authority to strengthen collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

> **Recommendation 2.** *To enhance the agency/non-governmental organization/government collaboration, the following should be pursued: (a) establishing a focal point at the regional level; (b) establishing a central focal point for overall guidance on operational activities with non-governmental organizations; (c) establishing regular consultations at the policy-making level with non-governmental organizations on operational problems and actively involving them in conferences on development issues; and (d) inter-agency support for activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service.*

37. The organizations of the United Nations system enhanced their collaboration with non-governmental organizations through their regional offices, established a focal point for non-governmental organization-related matters in almost all their national offices, and maintain a focal point at headquarters for regional and interregional non-governmental organization activities. Non-governmental organizations are encouraged to discuss policy issues and programme strategies, to contribute to draft policy papers and to participate in the relevant conferences. A parallel non-governmental organization meeting held during the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), participation of 1,200 non-governmental organizations in the World Food Summit and their involvement in the sixteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements are examples of productive consultations. WHO holds technical discussions with non-governmental organizations, UNIDO regularly involves non-governmental organizations in its conferences and workshops, while FAO has developed an updated strategy for cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination continue to support and collaborate with the Non-Governmental Liaison Service.

> **Recommendation 3.** *To strengthen the capabilities of non-governmental organizations and enhance multilateral operational collaboration, the United Nations should: (a) identify and support active networks of non-governmental organizations; (b) maintain and share databases of non-governmental organization partners and establish effective exchanges with non-governmental organization information sources worldwide; and (c) support capacity-building and training at the field level and in the non-governmental organization sector worldwide.*

38. Activities of the United Nations system along those lines include the following examples: to improve its capacity in networking, UNICEF develops an inventory of international and regional non-governmental organizations and networks; UNFPA works through regional networks of non-governmental organizations; the World NGO Forum, sponsored by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, strengthened considerably networking among non-governmental organizations; the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) relies on major non-governmental organization networks, some of them formed during the Habitat II preparatory process; the Global Environmental Citizenship initiative of UNEP promotes networking in support of the environment. The sharing of database information among agencies and with non-governmental organizations was at the centre of attention of the Secretary-General's interdepartmental working group on non-governmental organizations. The United Nations Drug Control Programme, UNEP, WFP, UNIDO and the United Nations Secretariat have developed, or are in the process of finalizing databases of non-governmental organizations relevant to their work. Capacity-building programmes for non-governmental organizations remain a priority for many organizations. Thus, UNICEF, for instance, allocated in

1995 around 34 per cent of its funds devoted to cooperation with non-governmental organizations to capacity-building; the United Nations Drug Control Programme has launched projects to strengthen the capacities of non-governmental organizations in Africa and South Asia; the Department for Development of Support and Management Services projects will train government and non-governmental organization officials in new and renewable energy; and WFP activities of training non-governmental organizations are organized as part of the training of counterparts. The United Nations staff is also participating in training sessions organized by non-governmental organizations. ECE is holding workshops on transition for non-governmental organizations. ECA has executed a trust fund on Popular Participation in Development, whereas ESCAP is implementing a number of capacity-building projects, some of them in cooperation with UNESCO. With regard to participative country programme evaluation approaches, UNICEF, for instance, outlines it in a new guideline being developed. UNFPA is revising its guidelines to expand collaboration with non-governmental organizations and ensure full accountability and internal controls. UNDP has implemented new participative evaluation methodologies that emphasize the use of grass-roots non-governmental organizations.

Recommendation 4. *The Administrative Committee on Coordination should take the lead in developing guidance for funding, financial management and auditing concerning local development non-governmental organizations, to help build their institutional capacities.*

39. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination remain of the view that the building of local development non-governmental organization capacities, in general, is more appropriately carried out at the national level, than through the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

Recommendation 5. *The Administrator of UNDP should ensure that a focal point is active in every field office and should update and reissue the general guidance on collaboration with non-governmental organizations.*

40. New UNDP procedures on project implementation and increased approval authority for regional bureaux and resident representatives make it much easier to engage non-governmental organizations in programme implementation without referring to headquarters. Current organizational arrangements provide for a non-governmental organization focal point in all country offices. UNDP actively participates in inter-agency coordination on harmonizing approaches to non-governmental organizations.

Recommendation 6. *The Secretary-General should update and issue management review of non-governmental organization involvement in Secretariat operational programmes and formulate an overall policy and framework for work with non-governmental organizations.*

Recommendation 7. *The General Assembly might wish to request the Secretary-General to update existing procedures for special conferences in order to encourage greater participation of non-governmental organizations in special regional and global conferences on development issues.*

41. These recommendations are reflected in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996 on consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations which updated, standardized and simplified the procedures for non-governmental organization participation in United Nations conferences.

VIII. A review of the specific development needs of small Member States and the responsiveness of the United Nations development system to those needs

42. The JIU report on the review of the specific development needs of small Member States and the responsiveness of the United Nations development system in meeting those needs was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session along with comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon (A/49/424 and Add.1). The Assembly, by its decision 49/431 of 19 December 1994, took note of the JIU report and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon.

Recommendation 1. *The United Nations system should give greater weight to "smallness" in the allocation of development assistance and be more flexible towards the specific needs of small States.*

43. The Administrative Committee on Coordination remains of the view that poverty, not size, is the main criterion for determining development needs of a given country. The members of the Committee believe that a link between small size and obstacles to sustained economic

development is much less direct than the recommendation assumes, and that smallness does not necessarily impede the emergence of a favourable micro-economic trade environment or advances in economic specialization. United Nations technical cooperation assistance to developing countries takes into account their specific needs caused by small size and low level of economic and social development.

44. FAO, for example, is focused on the requirements of small developing States belonging to the category of low-income food-deficit countries, including small island States. Its new offices in Samoa and Barbados, covering the South Pacific and Caribbean subregions, serve that purpose. The WHO initiative for strategic support to countries and peoples in greatest need is geared to the needs of the most disadvantaged countries and groups, including specific health issues of small countries. UNCTAD, as the focal point at the global level for monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, is playing an important role with respect to landlocked and island developing countries. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/122 of 19 December 1994, the analytical work and technical cooperation of UNCTAD related to small developing States, which also supports the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, is aimed at preventing the "phenomenon of marginalization" faced by those countries in the global economy, and involves assistance to national macroeconomic policies and improving their micro-economic trade environment. This is an important component of the ongoing work of UNCTAD on the construction of indicators of economic vulnerability for small island developing States.

45. The new resource allocation mechanism of UNDP favours least developed countries, which receive the bulk of UNDP core resources, with special emphasis on small island developing States. In some cases, UNDP has adapted the regional approach to development cooperation for small island States, to the benefit of a group of countries, rather than an individual one. The country programmes of UNICEF allow greater flexibility in response to the specific needs of individual countries and to areas of greatest needs, including multi-country programmes for small Member States. The United Nations Secretariat launched a number of projects for small island nations in the area of renewable energy, which provide training and assistance to enhance national capacities to carry out projects and research on priority issues. A number of projects of technical support services at the programme level were undertaken in small nations, covering such public administration areas as information and communication for the legislature; setting up a modern information system in the public sector; strengthening of the audit office; enhancing the national capacity for development management; and strengthening governance and State reform.

46. As a follow up to the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, ECLAC strengthened its studies on the specific development needs of small countries. In addition to a separate subprogramme for the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries of ESCAP also carry out five other subprogrammes dealing with regional economic cooperation, environment and sustainable development, poverty alleviation and social integration, transport, communications and tourism development and statistics.

> **Recommendation 2.** *United Nations agencies should give priority to assisting small States, with emphasis on regional approaches, in improving their capacity to cope with environmental issues interacting with economic development policies.*

47. In that regard, UNEP had the specific concerns of small States integrated into its programme of work for 1996-1997. A number of UNEP activities targeting small States are delivered regionally and subregionally, including one of the major ones, assessment and environmental information programme, which is carried out in partnership with international governmental organizations of the Pacific, Caribbean and South Asian island developing States. Its activities include assistance in environmental data management; establishment of geographical analysis training; assistance in the preparation of a subregional state-of-the-environment assessment for the South Pacific; development of the information exchange network for the Caribbean island States; establishment, training and servicing of 28 national focal points in small island developing States for the International Environmental Information Exchange System (INFOTERRA), waste management for small island developing States of the Pacific region, etc.

48. Habitat activities concerning small countries are focused on settlement planning and development, disaster mitigation and housing and infrastructure management. In the follow-up to Habitat II, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements is expanding key indicators related to human settlements and the environment in small States. ESCAP activities related to environmental issues of the

small island States include the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific and a regional expert group meeting for the South Pacific, which dealt with the follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The focus of ESCAP is on protecting the South Pacific's natural resources and biodiversity through conservation and sustainable management. It also assists small island States in the translation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States into national strategies, including the development of comprehensive environmental legislation. In line with that recommendation, UNICEF has developed the "PPE spiral" framework, reflecting interaction between poverty, population growth and environmental deterioration and allowing it to monitor and assess interaction between those factors.

Recommendation 3. *United Nations agencies should encourage small States to adopt regional approaches, wherever advantageous, with relevant assistance justified in cost-benefit terms and focused on human resources development, environmental activities and reducing the administrative constraints imposed by small size.*

49. Organizations and agencies delegated more authority to their regional offices and encouraged regional approaches, especially concerning small island States in the Pacific and the Caribbean. For example, regional approaches in the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements are promoted as part of the urban management, sustainable cities and community development programmes. To decentralize its assistance and to provide a more direct support to small countries, UPU has created posts of regional advisers in the Asia/Pacific and the Caribbean. Provisions related to the regional and subregional socio-economic integration of small States have been included in the medium-term plan of ECA for 1998-2002. Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP aimed at enhancing human resources development and national capabilities, include, in particular, assistance to small countries through the South Pacific Regional Energy Programme, the development of training materials for Capacity-21 workshops, workshops on informal financial systems and cooperation in trade and investment between Pacific island States and the economies of East and South-East Asia. ESCAP also arranges for nationals of small island States to undergo training in the more advanced developing countries of the region.

Recommendation 4. *United Nations should assist in creating and strengthening economic and social research institutes in small countries and, as a first step, should carry out pilot studies in a few countries in different regions.*

50. While reiterating their disagreement with this recommendation, as explained in the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the JIU report (A/49/424/Add.1), the members of the Committee do their best to use the existing research institutions to carry out research aimed at the improvement of the economic and social situation in small countries.

Recommendation 5. *The United Nations system should provide particular assistance when requested by small States. The Secretary-General should explore specific preventive measures for strengthening the stability and security of small States.*

51. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination remain of the view that the recommendation is more of a political nature than a socio-economic one. Nevertheless, relevant concerns are taken into account in their activities in small States. Thus, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, being aware that small countries are particularly vulnerable to problems of drug trafficking and money-laundering, organized a meeting in the Caribbean on coordination and cooperation in drug control, which resulted in the Barbados Plan of Action. Similar examples can be found in other organizations and agencies.

Recommendation 6. *The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions should examine the standardizing of area responsibilities in those regions where UNDP and specialized agency Representatives are responsible for more than one country.*

52. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination are of the view that the United Nations resident coordinator system and the country strategy notes provide the necessary system-wide coordination.

Recommendation 7. *UNDP and the specialized agencies should accord the Non-Self-Governing Territories that have indicative planning figures the same treatment as Member States and ensure that they are visited by development assistance missions.*

53. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination reiterate their view that the recommendation is of a legal, rather than substantive, nature.

Recommendation 8. *UNDP should conduct studies to identify the users of United Nations-produced information on the needs of small States, the type of*

information of the greatest value to these users and the most cost-effective method of its dissemination.

54. In line with that recommendation, the new preparatory process for the UNDP country cooperation frameworks replaced the separate pilot studies on channelling information to small countries. The new process involves assessing information needs and target groups and determining the best means of delivery in cooperation with specialized agencies.

Recommendation 9. *UNDP and the specialized agencies with offices in small countries should aim at greater sharing of databases, including providing access to them to key government offices.*

55. UNDP and its sister funds and programmes are presently developing "the common country assessment" as a tool for sharing databases, which involves a joint assessment of key socio-economic indicators during preparation and monitoring of country programmes and, eventually, within the newly proposed joint United Nations development assistance framework. Its procedures will be finalized by the end of 1997. The most well-known database, now available to officials in small countries and to the public at large through the Internet, is the UNDP Information Referral System (INRES) database of institutions in the South and their capabilities.

IX. United Nations system support for science and technology in Africa

56. The JIU report on United Nations system support for science and technology in Africa and the comments of the Administrative Committee on Coordination thereon were submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session (A/50/125-E/1995/19 and Add.1). In its decision 1995/234, the Economic and Social Council took note of the report and the comments thereon. In its resolution 50/102 of 20 December 1995, the Assembly took into account the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report and requested the Secretary-General to continue to promote and implement activities aimed at strengthening the United Nations system's support for science and technology in Africa in the context of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

57. The United Nations system carries out a wide range of activities along the lines recommended by JIU. ECA intensified its efforts to rationalize and streamline the existing institutions at the regional level. In October 1996, ESCAP developed a project concept on ESCAP-ECA collaboration in private sector development and investment-related technology transfer, which is presently under active consideration in UNDP. The WHO Research Policy and Strategy Coordination Programme for 1996-1997 is aimed at developing and strengthening the national health research policies; setting up national mechanisms for managing the award of research grants on community health problems; training nationals in health research methodology; disseminating WHO-supported research; and improving the involvement of WHO collaborating centres in national health research programmes. Of the 40 WHO collaborating centres in Africa, 8 have been designated as such during 1996-1997 period. Sixty operational research projects on various aspects of disease intervention programmes and health system research are currently implemented in 13 African countries. The African Advisory Committee for Health Research and Development focuses, *inter alia*, on specific issues related to the control of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, integrated disease surveillance in the region, and producing a framework for consolidating country contributions to the regional strategy for achieving the health-for-all goal.

58. The UNCTAD project for Burundi has enhanced institutional and policy-formulation capacity in the areas of science and technology and provided training in identification of technology needs, selection of technology and the formulation of research and development programmes. In Ethiopia, UNCTAD is initiating a project to review the investment, technology and innovation policies in order to assist policy makers in assessing the effectiveness of investment in science and technology and related institutions. The activities of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in advancing the transfer to Africa of environmentally sound technologies include research and development, technical cooperation, and information dissemination and training. They are concentrated in the fields of conserving energy and using renewable low-polluting energy sources; low-cost water and sanitation; waste management; environmentally sound construction industry, etc.

Recommendation 1. *The United Nations system should refine and adopt a normative framework for the design, execution and evaluation of institution-building projects in the low income and least developed countries.*

59. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination are incorporating the 10 functions, proposed by JIU, in the design, execution and evaluation of institution-building projects in African countries. Some organizations use special forms, which include those

functions, in their design and evaluation guidelines setting a standard for the definition of an institution-building output. For example, FAO activities in Africa include the strengthening of national research systems, inter-country sharing of experience, direct technology transfer and adaptation, and a multitude of training courses. The projects, implemented by UNEP under its capacity-building programme of promoting assessment and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, include workshops for African technology institutions on technology needs assessment and on transfer of municipal solid waste management technologies, a subregional workshop on environmental technology assessment for decision makers from 17 African countries, a technology transfer workshop on the implementation of the Montreal Protocol for French-speaking African countries, etc. The establishment of two ozone-depleting substances networks, for English- and French-speaking African States, has resulted in a number of specific country activities which contribute to the elimination of ozone-depleting substances in those countries.

Recommendation 2. *Institution-building project proposals should be justified by a pre-feasibility analysis of the long-term cost benefits and financial sustainability of the supported institution, self-financing project activities should be encouraged and relative cost-effectiveness of different implementation strategies and tools should be examined.*

60. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination consider the long-term sustainability, in its financial as well as technical and administrative dimensions, of institution-building projects as a critical programmatic issue and use the cost-effectiveness analysis in assessing it. It should be noted that some Committee members share the view that the financing of science and technology in Africa will involve resources well beyond the capacity of the United Nations system.

Recommendation 3. *The programme approach, mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/211, should be applied more systematically and comprehensively to institution-building projects.*

61. This recommendation is being implemented in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989, 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and all the other subsequent decisions related to the subject. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination have been promoting the programme approach both within the institution-building projects and in inter-agency forums. The development of the system-wide understanding of the programme approach within the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and further review by the Committee of best practices in this area were undertaken.

Recommendation 4. *The Administrative Committee on Coordination should establish a set of penalties for a substandard performance of an executing agency. Project agreements should specify and quantify the direct technical inputs to be provided by an executing agency.*

62. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination would like to reiterate their negative view, as reflected in the Committee's 1995 comments on the JIU report (A/50/125/Add.1), concerning the introduction of "a set of penalties". Recommendation to specify and quantify the direct technical inputs is being implemented in UNDP-funded projects through technical support services contracts.

Recommendation 5. *Justification for the chief technical advisers position should be very clearly established for projects supporting national or regional institutions to be increasingly used as implementing agencies.*

63. To ensure the full involvement of national and regional institutions, national project directors and national experts have increasingly been recruited in recent years to implement agencies-executed projects. At the same time, the number of man-months for the chief technical adviser's services are being drastically reduced, and more substantive input of a given agency's staff is being introduced in field operations.

Recommendation 6. *The end-users of institution-building projects should be involved in their design and planning; linkages to the production system should be specified in project agreements.*

64. The organizations of the United Nations system rely on the full participation of all development actors, including the Government, the civil society and the private sector of a given country. The end-users are taken into account at the initial stage of the design and planning of a project. UNESCO, for example, gives priority to such linkages through its "university-industry-science partnership" programme financed from its International Fund for Technological Development of Africa.

Recommendation 7. *The Secretary-General should: (a) initiate discussions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on collaboration in support of science and technology capacity-building*

in Africa; (b) consider establishing pilot science and technology strategic institutions of national or subregional scope; and (c) undertake consultations on the possibility of a summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity on science and technology for development in Africa, with substantive contributions from the United Nations system.

65. In their decentralization process, the organizations and agencies are building up the capacity of their regional offices, in order to strengthen the United Nations system's policy and programmatic collaboration at the regional level in support of science and technology. Consideration is being given to the possibility of transforming the existing science and technology institutions in Africa, which are being jointly supported by UNDP, UNIDO and ECA, into pilot projects. The joint secretariat of ECA, the Organization of African Unity and African Development Bank keeps under active review the proposal for the summit meeting within the context of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.